(b) if so, the details of loss/gains to be obtained by telephone department in the country;

(c) how far the common man shall be benefited; and

(d) what shall be a call charge to meet loss of STD calls?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) One India involves a series of steps with a final objective of uniform and reduced call rates across the country. Although efforts are being made to implement it from January, 2006 but no date has been notified as yet.

(b) and (c) With the reduced call rates, common man is expected to avail the benefit of cheaper services on long distance calls. The exact impact of loss/gain has not been estimated.

(d) At present no call charges has been prescribed to meet the loss of STD calls.

Irregularities on providing the PCO sets in Rajasthan

†941. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a great deal of difficulty is being experienced in getting PCO connection at panchayat levels in rural areas of Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that irregularities are also being committed in the matter of quality of sets provided while giving new connections; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) and (b) In Rajasthan, 9,839 villages are without the facility of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) as on 30.09.2005 (this excludes villages having population less than 100, villages lying in thick forest areas etc.). These villages will be provided VPTs progressively by November, 2007. In such cases, provision of PCO at Panchayat level experience difficulty because of the current lack of supporting infrastructure.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

†Original notice of question was received in Hindi.